

# Promising Practices

*Harm Reduction Program, PrEP Program, and  
HIV/HCV Linkage to Care in Baltimore County*



Baltimore County Department Health  
Kristin Arbaugh, LCSW-C

June 5, 2018



# Baltimore County

## Department of Health (BCDH)

- **Vision:** Healthy people living, working and playing in Baltimore County
- **Mission:** To promote health and prevent disease by educating communities, advocating for healthy lifestyles, linking people to resources and treating various health conditions

# Harm Reduction Program

- Risk Reduction model with a continuum of services including HIV and HCV testing, syringe exchange, NARCAN<sup>®</sup>, supportive services referrals, etc.
- Fixed site locations at all 9 health centers
  - Access to a number of health related services
  - HRP is one of many services offered by the Department

# Program Timeline

- Initial Meeting with Maryland Department of Health (MDH): **March 16, 2017**
- Stakeholder and client interviews: **April 3**
- First BCDH workgroup meeting: **April 5**
- Drug Overdose Lethality Review Team (DOLRT) meeting: **April 21**
- Initial draft application submitted to MDH: **June 23**
- Final application submission: **August 2**
- Approval: **August 18**

# Workgroup

- BCDH did not utilize capacity building funds
- Developed application with internal capacity
- Workgroup was developed to assist with application and consisted of staff from all Bureaus:
  - Administration
  - Healthcare Access
  - Clinical Services
  - Prevention, Protection, and Preparedness
  - Behavioral Health

# Workgroup

- Multiple meetings to develop stakeholder survey, review epidemiological data, and discuss implementation
- Established during first meeting that BCDH would adopt a Risk Reduction model that includes syringe exchange and referral to health-related services

# Risk Reduction Model

Prevention ← → Risk Reduction



# Stakeholders

- Homeless Services Providers
- Methadone Centers
- Faith-Based Organizations
- First Responders
- Public School System
- Human Services Providers
- Consumers
- Behavioral Health Service Providers
- Baltimore County DOLRT



# Stakeholder & Client Interviews

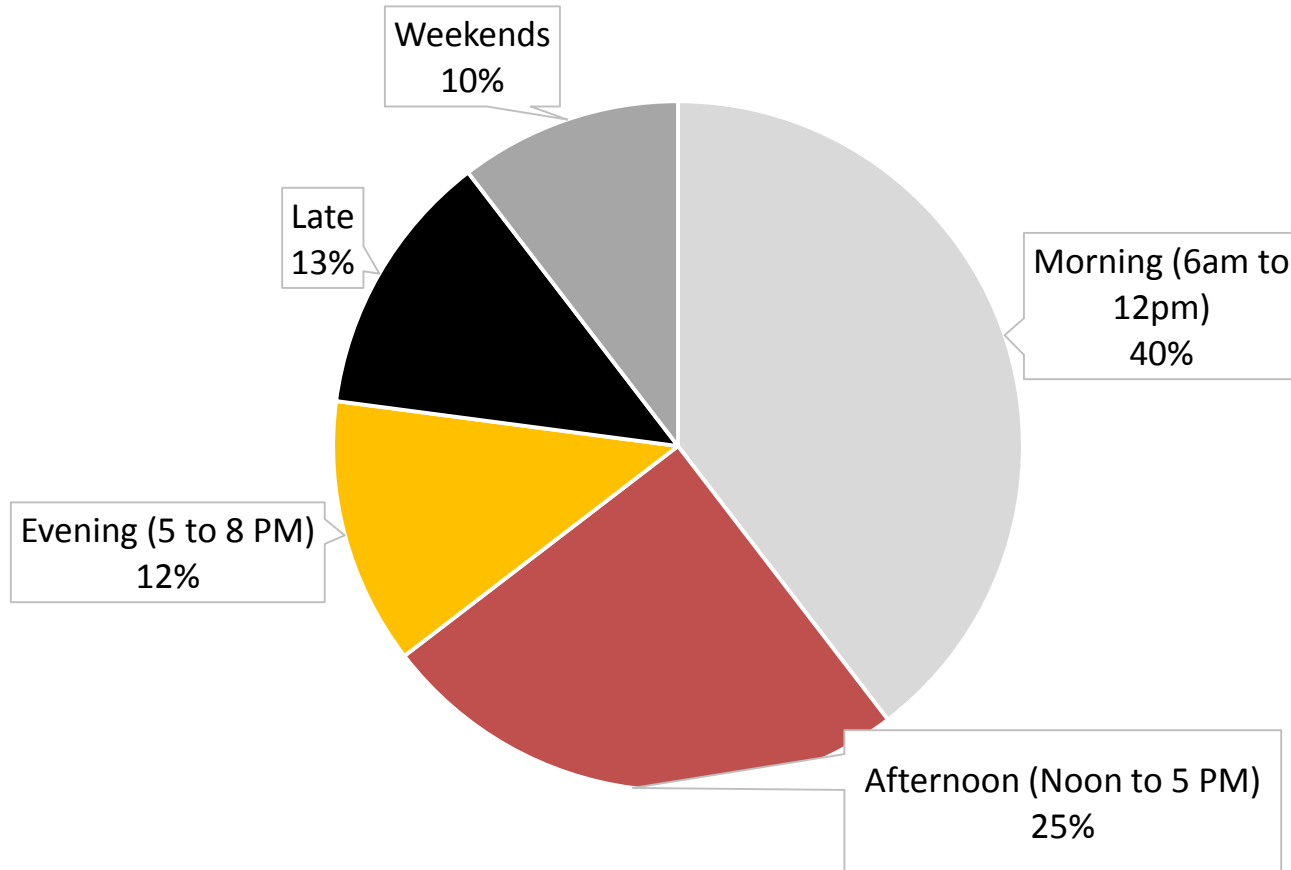
- Brief, concise questions with four main objectives:
  - Need
  - Target Population
  - Locations and Hours
  - Benefits and Barriers
- Conducted 35 stakeholder and 30 client interviews
- Utilized staff and community homeless provider for client interviews

# Interview Objective Outcomes

- **Need** - 100% of interviewees stated that a Syringe Services Program (SSP) was needed in Baltimore County
- **Target Population** - Issue that impacts everyone
- **Location** - 100% stated Essex, Dundalk, and Lansdowne were locations in the County where a SSP was needed

# Interview Objective Outcomes

## Hours of Operation



# Interview Objective Outcomes

## **Benefits**

- Increasing opportunity for collaboration among various County departments and agencies
- Increasing strategies for combating the opioid epidemic
- Preventing a recurrence of injecting drug use as a primary mode of transmission for HIV and Hepatitis C
- Increasing access to clean syringes
- Providing access to needed resources (i.e., peers, nursing, substance use treatment referral)

# Interview Objective Outcomes

## **Barriers**

- Community feedback
- Clients' fear of stigma
- Location
- Appropriate training of front line staff
- Confidentiality/trust

# BCDH Model

- Site-based model
  - Multidisciplinary team
  - Holistic approach to offer any needed service from Baltimore County Department of Health and Human Services
  - Well-known in the community
- Continuous quality improvement and evaluation to be open to change and adapt
- Open to change based on client feedback and experiences with dictate ongoing development

# Staffing

- Hired seven positions to provide services in the HRP:
  - (1) Program Administrator
  - (2) Human Services Associates
  - (2) Behavioral Health Associates (Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialists)
  - (1) Public Health Nurse
  - (1) Office Assistant
- Multiple existing in-kind staff will be providing support

# What's Next?

- Peer collaboration between Bureau of Healthcare Access and Bureau of Behavioral Health
- Recruitment of clients to the program through partnership with Baltimore City SSP and community partners
- Implementation at BCDH's local health centers
- Piloting program hours and locations and will re-evaluate based on attendance and client need



# What's Next?

- Formation of Drug User Health Group, Client Advisory Board and development of client satisfaction surveys
- Development of relationships with academic partners
- Community clean-ups with police and community groups

# **Pre- Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Program**

- Two Human Services Associates (HSA) provide non-medical case management services to Baltimore County residents that are at high risk of becoming infected with HIV
- Provide referral, linkage, and non-medical case management services to identified residents to ensure that clients are taking the medication as prescribed, obtaining necessary lab tests and adhering to their providers' recommendations

# PrEP Program

- Assist the client with enrollment into health insurance and other entitlement programs, health insurance literacy education, and enrollment in appropriate PrEP co-pay assistance programs as needed
- Accompany clients accompany clients to provider appointments as needed to ensure clients have lab work completed as recommended by the Center of Disease Control and regularly scheduled appointments

# PrEP Program

- Referrals
  - HIV Prevention Program
  - Partner Services Program
  - Ryan White Case Management Program for sero-discordant couples
  - Hospitals
  - Social Services Agencies
  - FQHCs
  - Self-referrals

# **HIV and Hepatitis C (HCV) Linkage to Care Program**

- Two Human Services Associates (HSA) provide linkage to care services to Baltimore County residents that are living with Hepatitis C
- Provide referral and linkage to identified residents to ensure that clients are obtaining necessary lab tests and attending provider appointments

# HIV/HCV Linkage to Care Program

- Provide education about the infection, testing and treatment to patients and physicians
- Act as advocates for patients and as liaisons to other County programs
- Locating people identified as lost to care to re-engage them into services

# HCV Linkage to Care Program

- Referrals
  - HIV Prevention Program: Rapid Testing
    - 20 staff trained to provide rapid HCV testing
    - Testing at substance use intensive outpatient centers, senior centers, health centers, etc.
  - Lab Reports
  - Detention Center

# Questions?

Kristin Arbaugh, LCSW-C  
karbaugh@baltimorecountymd.gov  
410-887-2104